

Recognizing the Leadership of Coach Bill Snyder

of Kansas State University

by Congressman Jerry Moran

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I rise tonight to honor Kansas State University's football coach Bill Snyder. At a press conference earlier today, Coach Snyder announced his retirement as head coach of the K-State Wildcats after 17 seasons. Coach Snyder leaves behind a legacy of success for a football program, a school, and a community that is stronger and better because of his leadership.

Football is a great American tradition, and this tradition is alive and well in Manhattan, Kansas. This is Wildcat country, where during football season Powercat flags are proudly flown and where Saturdays are spent at Wagner Field cheering K-State to victory.

But times were different when Coach Snyder took over K-State's football program in 1988. Sports Illustrated had identified K-State as the worst college football program in the nation. Undeterred, Coach Snyder took on the challenge and through hard work and determination

performed what has been labeled as the "Miracle in Manhattan." By 1993, K-State had achieved a victory in the Copper Bowl. During the next 10 seasons they would advance to bowl games, including the Cotton Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, and a memorable defeat over first-ranked Oklahoma in 2003 to seize the Big 12 Championship.

With 135 victories, Coach Snyder is K-State's all-time winningest football coach. He is credited with orchestrating what many regard to be the biggest turnaround in college football history. As former Oklahoma and Dallas Cowboy coach Barry Switzer once said, "Bill Snyder isn't the coach of the year, and he isn't the coach of the decade. He's the coach of the century."

Coach Snyder's successes on the field are matched by his achievements off the field. He taught his players the value of a sound work ethic, attention to detail, and respect that has helped them succeed during the game as well as in the classroom and in life. Coach Snyder has used his prominence in the hearts of K-State fans to promote causes that have strengthened the Manhattan community and the state of Kansas. And no one can deny the power of purple-pride that has risen following K-State President Jon Wefald's decision to hire Coach Snyder. The school's growing athletic program, flourishing student body, visionary administration and supportive alumni have all contributed to make Kansas State University one of our country's leading institutions of learning.

On behalf of many grateful Kansans, I thank Coach Snyder for his contributions. It will be hard to imagine K-State football without this legendary coach, and I wish him and his family the best.

